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Wait, William Bell

Effort and progress

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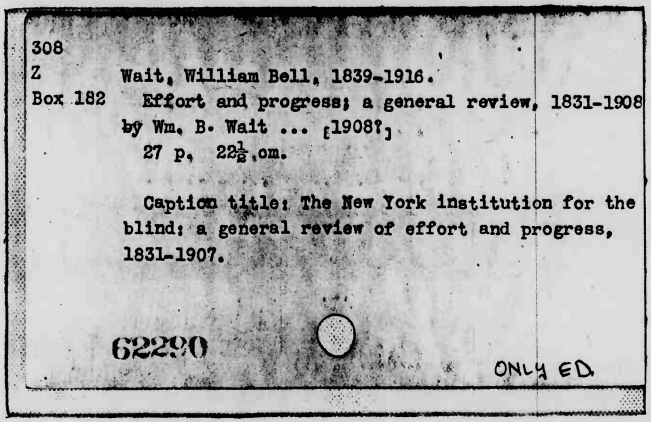

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# EFFORT AND PROGRESS

## A GENERAL REVIEW

## 1831–1908

By WM. B. WAIT,

Emeritus Principal The New York Institution for the Blind.

# EFFORT AND PROGRESS

## A GENERAL REVIEW

## 1831–1908

By WM. B. WAIT,

Emeritus Principal The New York Institution
for the Blind.

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# The New York Institution for the Blind.

## A GENERAL REVIEW OF EFFORT AND PROGRESS.

## 1831—1907.

As present views and methods are the logical resultant of seventy-six years of experience, the circumstances, conditions and influences which determined the course taken from the very beginning of the work will be here briefly reviewed.

The object of the Institution, as stated in its charter, is the education of blind children. In its ultimate results, the term education as here used must be construed as including the same objects that are covered by the term as generally used. The loss of sight, however, disqualifies one for the practice of the ordinary school, and so modifies physical conditions and mental states as to give rise to a different pedagogy, both in theory and practice, from that which prevails among normal people.

Starting without funds, experience, facilities, concise facts or proven example, the Managers undertook to find a solution of this educational problem.

It is worthy of note that at that time trades or mechanical pursuits were generally learned during an apprenticeship, either actual or nominal, after leaving school, and no blind person would anywhere be accepted as an apprentice. Manual training, as a means of reënforcing and broadening the usual curriculum, had not then been developed; and accordingly, recourse was had to instruction in such simple mechanical operations as were available.

During the first three years no provision had been made for the admission of State pupils, and the Managers were free as to the line and method in which they would carry on their special educational work.

Obviously, the education of the blind includes the subjects common to the education of those who see, but which are unfolded by special methods and appliances.

The first step, therefore, was the organization of the literary and music departments, in which the essentials of education are embraced.

Two very useful kinds of apparatus, the cellated frame and T V type, designed to facilitate the study of mathematics, and the dissected maps for use in the study of geography, were devised here. The frame has recently been much improved, while several varieties of signs have been added to the type, which are now made of aluminum, instead of type metal, as formerly.

The literary department has for many years included a kindergarten and an academic section, with full courses meeting college entrance requirements.

In 1891 the experiment of testing methods and results by Regents examinations was successfully tried, and they have ever since been retained, proving to be an excellent discipline and offering an incentive that would otherwise be wanting.

In 1834 an act was passed providing for the education of a certain number of State pupils at this Institution, and the act required that, besides instruction in the usual branches, all such pupils, male and female, should be instructed in some trade or employment.

To the original purpose of education there was therefore added a specific purpose not germane or essential to education proper; moreover, it required the Managers to venture into the unknown field of trades and manufactures with a class of disabled and infirm children.

At the time under consideration, the extent to which blindness disables one from mechanical acquirements and from successful competition had not been recognized, and it was hoped that the blind might be made self-supporting through a course of industrial training. After entering upon the relations with the State, first brought about by the act of 1834, this hope that self-sustaining power might be acquired, and that support and profit might be derived from mechanical pursuits, formed a strong incentive to that persistent and exhaustive effort which marked each of the succeeding years during which it was maintained.

The period from 1832 to 1862 exhibits four distinct phases, which may be briefly summarized. The first extends from 1832 to 1845, during which time every handicraft which seemed feasible to acquire and to follow as an occupation was carefully taught by skilled instructors. These branches included willow work, mattresses, weaving rag and list carpets; weaving and braiding of floor mats of manila, coir and jute; braiding palm leaf, and pasteboard box work. In 1844 the willow ware comprised fourteen lines and the pasteboard work seven lines, besides many specialties in both.

As time went on the graduates who had followed one or another of these trades found that they could not individually compete with seeing labor, and therefore were obliged to abandon the effort. Lack of



capital, the need in almost every case of the coöperation of a skilled seeing person, the loss of time in selling that should be given to production, difficulty of locomotion which makes it necessary to have a guide in getting about, the limited demand for goods, and, more than all, the want of sight, all contributed to this result.

But while the accumulated experience of this period had clearly indicated that the trades did not furnish an adequate basis of independent self-support for an individual working by himself, it was felt that the difficulties might be overcome by concentration and organization; and accordingly the Managers undertook to relieve the situation by giving employment to the graduates, who should also reside on the premises. This introduced the second phase of the undertaking, which continued from 1845 to 1849. The features of this period were: (1) Continued instruction of the pupils in all available trades; (2) the employment of the graduates as journeymen; (3) the residence of the employed graduates on the premises.

In this way the Institution, in addition to its primary character as a school, took on that of a "working home."

Although graduates were employed as journeymen at full time and the work of the pupil apprentices was utilized to the best advantage, a serious loss was incurred, and it was thought that this might be due to the great disproportion between the number of apprentices and the number of journeymen that were employed. Moreover, the benefits of division of labor could not be derived from so small a body of workers. These and other considerations, coupled with the desire of the outside adult blind for employment, led to the third phase, in the severe and strenuous efforts of the Managers to prove, if possible, that the hand labor of those who have lost their sight can be made commercially productive. This phase extends from 1848 to 1855.

In the former year the charter was amended by adding the words, "and also for the purpose of affording an asylum and employment for other blind persons."

The Institution then presented a most complex character: (1) As a school for the education of blind children in the usual school branches, in music and in trades; (2) as a school for the instruction of adult blind persons in trades; (3) as a factory to afford work for the adult blind in shops; (4) as a boarding house or residence for such employees, male and female; (5) as an asylum for adult blind men and women.

The residence feature presented so many difficulties, both as to management and support, that at the beginning of 1855, after nine years of trial, and two years after similar action had been taken by the directors of the School at South Boston, it was found necessary to abandon it. This completed the third phase.

From the beginning of 1855 to 1862, which forms the fourth phase, the business was conducted on ordinary business lines, with this difference, however, that while an ordinary factory might work on part time or be shut down entirely when markets were overstocked, trade dull or prices of raw material too high, the Institution kept its blind employees at work, as otherwise they would lose the stipend upon which they were dependent.

Buildings specially designed for the purpose were erected having a frontage of 200 feet on Eighth Avenue by 90 feet on Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth Streets, affording a fine salesroom, ample space for workrooms, storage of raw materials and finished goods, and for all other purposes. The business was both wholesale and retail and comprised sixteen lines of willow work, eight lines of pasteboard boxes, woven and hand-made mats and rugs in great variety of material, pattern and color; mattresses, upholstering, braiding palm leaf, netting and hammock work, brushes of hair and vegetable fiber, brooms, and a great variety of knitted and crocheted goods.

It was found that the local wholesale and retail trade did not absorb the goods that were produced, and samples of fine quality were sent out in the hope of finding a wider market in other sections. The business was advertised, appeals were made to the public, and profit-sharing and piecework were practiced, under the stimulus of which the men worked from twelve to thirteen hours a day. Every effort that might promote success was made.

It is hardly necessary to dwell upon the expedients, experiments, unrealized hopes and the losses which attended this effort from 1832 to 1862, when to save the Institution from utter ruin it was abandoned, and at the request of the Managers the amending act of 1848, making the Institution an asylum and working home, was repealed. The requirement as to instruction in trades was no longer made, and the Institution then resumed its original and proper character as defined in its charter.

Recently, much has been written and said to the effect that blind people, if afforded an opportunity, are able to earn an independent support at trades. Such statements are clearly fallacious, for they assume that blind people possess the ability to perform those operations to which eyesight and light are essential, and of which blindness has deprived them. It will not be amiss, however, to briefly consider the validity of such statements in the light of recorded experience.

In the efforts made by the Managers, capital was furnished without charge for interest, and buildings and operating plant were furnished rent free. As the Institution furnished living room gratis, the workers paid only for table board, so that the amount that had to be earned to pay for a living on this basis was much less than the amount necessary to pay for a living on the ordinary basis.



Profit on products above fixed charges, shop cost and current expense is the test of earning power, and the mere fact that wages are paid is no proof that they have been earned. During all the years that the Institution was paying wages, the workers may have thought that they were earning the living for which the wages were paid; while in fact the wages were not earned but were paid out of capital, and the belief was a pleasant delusion.

When the Managers determined that the whole industrial effort must be abandoned by them, they suggested that another effort for the instruction and employment of the blind at trades might be undertaken by an organization entirely independent of the Institution, and accordingly a society having this purpose in view was incorporated with the title, "The Blind Mechanics Association."

That Association had its own separate Board of Managers and was in no way connected with this Institution. It started with a cash capital of some $25,000, and the city provided a suitable building rent free. All the facilities for profitable operation were acquired and the workers comprised only experienced men and women. If success were anywhere possible, it seems that it should have been attained by that Association. For reasons, however, with which this recital has made us familiar, the capital of the Association was in a relatively short time wiped out, and the effort came to a disappointing but inevitable end.

From 1862 to the present, attention has been given to the adoption of the systematic methods of training comprised in kindergarten and manual training courses.

In 1869 the sewing machine was introduced. An apt and ambitious pupil was taken for the experiment. Three years of the most persistent effort were required before she had acquired a mastery of the machine. This has ever since been one of the most useful and important branches of instruction for the girls.

In 1871 instruction was for the first time attempted with the knitting machine. In this case, as before, a single pupil was selected, and again three years of the most patient effort were required before a method had been developed and teacher and pupil had learned how to perform their respective parts of the task.

Eight knitting machines were procured and instruction was regularly given to the girls. The dropping of stitches appeared to be an insurmountable obstacle, as it was impracticable for any teacher to give the time to observe the stitches as they dropped and to pick them up. The only remedy lay in detecting by ear the slight click of the latch of a needle from which the stitch was dropped. That such delicacy of hearing could be developed in the midst of the whir of a number of machines at first seemed incredible, but it was acquired in every case. Experience, however, showed that the knitting machine has small educative value, its operation soon

becoming monotonous and unproductive. After we had shown the way, persistent efforts having a distinctly industrial purpose were made with it elsewhere, but they proved ineffectual.

In 1872 the plaiting of cane bottoms and backs of chairs was first introduced. It is an interesting fact that some years later this branch was incorporated into the courses of instruction in schools for manual training. It is, however, not a trade, but simply a method of placing the strips of cane in a certain relation to each other on the frame to which they are attached.

In 1884, in addition to sewing, knitting by hand and by machine, embroidery and crocheting, the girls were taught to make rugs by working patterns with colored worsteds on canvas.

In 1885 the Managers appointed T. Bailey Myers, Peter Marié, Frederick W. Rhinelander and Temple Prime a Special Committee to inquire into and report upon this same subject. After a careful study of the whole field from 1831 to 1885, the Committee recorded its conclusion as follows :

"The Committee, after considering the various attempts and failures of the past, concur in the conclusion, so uniformly arrived at by their predecessors, that it is not reasonable to hope we may ever be able to teach the blind to hold his own in mechanical pursuits unaided, as against the competition of the seeing man, backed as the latter is by accumulated capital and concentrated skill."

In 1882 kindergarten methods were introduced. This fact is mentioned because these methods constitute for young children the best possible preparation to systematic manual training. Prior to this, object teaching, after the excellent methods developed at the Oswego Normal School, had been employed. Object lessons and kindergarten training are invaluable as a means of teaching the pupil how to acquire primary knowledge, and for cultivating the powers of observation, comparison, combination, analysis, memory, suggestion and action.

In 1890 cooking was first introduced as a branch of instruction for the girls. It is obvious that the best domicile for a blind woman is with her own family or in the family of some relative or friend. In every household there is a wide range of duties which she can perform, representing money earned and requiring the attention of a mind well trained in the use of knowledge relating to the various interests of the household. With this, as with every other subject introduced, much effort has been expended in experimental work and in devising ways and means of instruction suited to the existing difficult conditions. In the scheme of the State Department of Education this subject is classed as a branch of manual training.

In 1901 an experiment was made for the first time in the manual training classes for girls in the use of the vegetable fiber known as raffia.



This is now a regular feature in manual training schools, and forms part of our manual training course in connection with cord, reed and other related work.

This review clearly defines the devious and difficult path along which our Institution has gone since 1831, and shows that its present practice is the outcome of wide experience and careful study.

## MUSIC.

Music has from the start been properly regarded as furnishing a most useful and indispensable means for the education of the blind.

Instruction in class singing and pianoforte has always been highly esteemed and maintained without interruption,

In 1844 a new two manual organ with sixteen stops and pedal bass was installed. It has since been succeeded by two others, the last one being the beautiful instrument presented by Mr. F. Augs. Schermerhorn, president of the Institution.

The New York Point Literary System, first originated and presented here in 1868, was adopted by the teachers of the country at their meeting in Indianapolis in 1871. A tangible musical notation is a necessary complement of a literary system, and in 1872 the New York Point System of Musical Notation was introduced. It was submitted to the American Association of Instructors of the Blind, and after careful consideration was approved. A comparison of this with every other system of recording music in tangible form will clearly show its superiority, both in principle and in detail, as a representative of and substitute for the staff notation. It enables the pupil to read and write music, and thus relieves him from an otherwise unavoidable and complete dependence upon the teacher while in school, and upon others in after life. It has contributed immeasurably to render the blind independent in the study of music and in the subsequent pursuit of it, both as a vocation and an avocation.

The appliances for writing and printing the New York Point System are the desk and pocket tablets, the Kleidograph for paper writing, and the Stereograph for embossing metal plates to be used in printing, all of which were devised and perfected here. These systems and appliances have revolutionized the methods and scope of education, have vastly increased the amount of embossed literature and music, and at the same time have greatly lessened their cost.

The subject of harmony lies at the foundation of a musical education, and it would seem that it would naturally make a strong appeal and that a knowledge of it would be easy of impartation by teachers and of acquisition by pupils. It was found, however, to be difficult and uninteresting. Progress was slow and the results unsatisfactory.

In 1865 a staff music board with movable signs designed to facilitate the study of harmony was constructed. While it served excellently to

represent chords as they appear to the eye, it failed to serve the desired instructional purpose.

Another effort in this direction was made in 1881 and 1882, when an apparatus for tangible thorough bass writing, employing the mathematical frame, the T V numerals and the New York Point Music signs, was devised to facilitate the study of harmony. While it furnished a complete method of recording all harmonic forms, either full or abbreviated, still, owing to the time required for the manipulation of the type, it was found that the mind was made to wait upon the hand, thus hindering rather than helping progress. In these, as in many other cases, experience proved that the means which theoretically promised well failed to serve the ultimate end. Although our instructors followed the usual course marked out by standard authors, the general results continued to be indifferent and unsatisfactory, and a solution of the difficulty was finally sought in the fact that all the standard works from earliest to latest were written on the visual or sight basis, to be pursued with the aid of pencil and paper, blackboard and chalk. In fact, however, the visual notation of the staff and its nomenclature are only the signs for the real things, which are the tones, perceivable only by the ear; and as our pupils have hearing and not sight, the substitution of a method on a purely hearing or aural basis, in place of a visual basis, was suggested.

Such a course, however, requires a high training of the ear, a power of aural discrimination of tonal bodies for which no provision whatever is made in the standard works on harmony. To meet this need, and as an introduction to the study of harmony proper, the selection and arrangement of materials for a thorough course of ear training, including the recognition, naming and classification of single tones, scales, intervals, and all classes of chords and keys, was commenced in 1888. As in the case of our Normal Course of Piano Technic, the materials for this work were in process of selection and arrangement through practical tests in class work for several years. This preliminary branch is called Harmonic Notation, and the study of it has completely changed the conditions, vastly enriching the results of the study of harmony, which is now pursued with interest and satisfaction by both teachers and pupils.

In every school, and generally in every graded group of schools, the use by teachers and pupils of the same textual material in every branch of study is a prime condition of effective organization and satisfactory uniform progress. The Library of Congress contains several hundred different text-books on arithmetic, and while each of these publications might furnish an adequate course in this branch, it is obvious that if different schools or different grades in the same school were to follow different authors, consistent, harmonious work could not be done, nor could adequate results be accomplished.



Uniformity is essential, not only in the teaching of primary and high school branches, in the study of harmony, counterpoint, music history, acoustics, and the other theoretic branches of a course in music, but also in the various branches of technic in music.

From the time of Hummel and Clementi until now, assiduous publishers and teachers have furnished a vast amount of textual material especially for the pianoforte, and it is the usual custom of schools to adopt some one of these courses as the general basis of technical study. It might seem on first thought that any well-arranged "method" could be profitably pursued in a school for the blind; but as efforts on this basis proved ineffectual, the principal reasons for such want of adaptation in the means commonly employed are worthy of note.

All these "methods" are voluminous and are designed for "sight reading" at the keyboard; but as the blind pupil cannot read by "sight," it follows that in order to use the technical material as prescribed he must memorize it, and this is an utterly impossible task.

The material must, therefore, be cut greatly, and as the use of one method soon becomes fatally monotonous, the tendency is to resort to several methods, so that no two teachers or pupils follow the same course. A shift of pupils from one teacher to another is accompanied by disparagement and discouragement. The work done by one teacher bears no necessary or discoverable relation to that of another, and there is an entire lack of the coördination which marks the literary department.

To remedy the trouble, several things were found to be necessary, the most important of which are: (1) The condensation of the technical material to the smallest possible limits that will serve the purpose; (2) the elaboration of this material through all the aspects of meter, rhythm, dynamics and velocity; (3) a sequential development of a series of technical patterns by means of a logical and easily recognized expansion of the primary material, through all the phases of practice.

In 1876 this task was undertaken and more than five years were devoted to it, during which time the selected material was repeatedly worked over, condensed and arranged in accordance with the unmistakable requirements ascertained by practice. Beginning with the younger pupils, the system was gradually prescribed until it was in operation throughout the entire school. Since this plan was adopted, new teachers, no matter where their training may have been had, neither find nor cause confusion, objects and methods are comprehensible, and their work at once becomes productive; while the gain to the pupils, through the acquisition and retention of all the essentials of technic, is inestimable.

Through the use of this Normal Course of Piano Technic it became possible to incorporate a new and most valuable feature by forming the advanced pupils into a normal training class under the direction of supervising teachers. The prospect of becoming tutors imparts an interest

and an incentive to the younger pupils that would otherwise be wanting, while the tutors gain a familiarity with the technical material and with the principles and art of teaching that can be acquired in no other way.

Thus it will be seen that this school exhibits in a modest way some of the essential features of a normal school or teachers' college. The course also possesses certain pedagogical advantages over the same material as presented in the usual visual methods, which, as long experience shows, tend to delay progress and to foster and fix an incorrect position and action of the hand of the blind pupil at the keyboard; but these features cannot be dwelt upon here. It ought to be noted that this course finds lucid expression upon the staff, and possesses all the features desired in a course of technic for pupils who see.

Another notable and important achievement is the creation of a library of pianoforte and organ music, which has been selected and edited with the greatest care and printed in the New York Point System. The pianoforte music has here been classified by years into ten grades. This classification work, which involves a discriminating knowledge of the content and character of every piece, has been carried on in this school for years, and, so far as is known, has no parallel in any other school for the blind. This classification is an aid in rendering the work uniform, economizes time, gives the teachers a more comprehensive and intelligent view of the material, and will be of great assistance in after life to the pupils of this and of other schools.

The sufficiency of the technical and textual material employed and of the methods of instruction pursued is fully proved by the success which has for many years uniformly attended our pupils in the severe examinations of the American College of Musicians, at the piano, organ, and in all theoretic subjects.

Piano tuning is a branch not prescribed in any primary, high school or college course, and therefore has no standing as a subject or as an end of education as recognized by the educational authorities. It is not a trade, but rather a skilled vocation or occupation, the pursuit of which requires certain natural aptitudes possessed by but few, and which are developed by a long course of training.

This subject must be pursued in conjunction with other subjects as a part of the regular school work, and not on a commercial or business basis as obtains in a factory. Neither can it be made a specialty, except in a technical school or department where a student, having already acquired his general education, devotes all his time, say eight hours a day, to a single branch.

That the course pursued is entirely adequate to the qualification of a good tuner is attested by the fact that Steinway, Weber and other high-class firms have employed our young men.



The tuning class is drawn from those taking piano lessons, and as about 55 per cent. of the pupils are under fourteen years of age, the number who can be assigned to this class is small.

## PHYSICAL CULTURE.

Physical culture is not included in the syllabus of the Department of Education of the State of New York, and no credit can be gained by any school or its pupils for time spent or work done on this line. In 1861 calisthenics were introduced, and this was, I think, the first move in this direction in any school for the blind. The military spirit engendered by the Civil War resulted in the formation of a military company, which was trained in marching and in the manual of arms. As only part of the boys and none of the girls could participate, and as these exercises possessed small educational or developing value, they were discontinued. Prior to 1878 the calisthenic classes comprised only part of the pupils, but in that year the subject was placed in the daily schedule, the classes being arranged in grades. The general course was that prescribed by Dr. Dio Lewis, and included free gymnastics and exercises with light apparatus. This practice was followed until 1889, when the Angerstein and Eckler System of Physical Culture was introduced for all the classes, sixteen in number. Dr. Angerstein was Superintendent of the Gymnastics of the City of Berlin. Mr. Eckler was head teacher of the Royal Institution for Training Teachers of Gymnastics. This course of free gymnastics, together with exercises for light apparatus, was specially designed to meet the needs of growing children and youth, and, among other meritorious features, recognized sex as a factor in determining the character of the exercises. The essential value of a thorough and judicious course adapted to daily use, during each of the succeeding years of boyhood and girlhood, is obvious. Among blind children are frequently noticed some who roll the head, sway the body or make some other awkward movement, and experience shows that these automatic habits are not corrected either by spontaneous play or by the training of the gymnastic classes, which, for the time, merely substitutes either a casual or an orderly movement in place of one that is automatic. Both at play and in regular gymnastic work, the perceptive faculties, and mainly that of sight, which the blind child lacks, are brought into action, while the mental faculties find but limited incentive and scope for action. It is the function of the school to awaken and stimulate the mind to action, and when this has been done, the movements will be the result of intelligent volition, rather than of purposeless desire, and the disagreeable habits will disappear.

In the present organization the entire school is included in the physical culture classes which meet every day. This practice is very essential, for regular daily training is as indispensable to physical as to mental

development. Two special teachers are employed; one a young lady graduate of the Sargent School of Physical Culture, of Cambridge, Mass., and the other a medical student, who is an instructor in this branch in Columbia University. In respect to health, activity, buoyancy of spirits, capacity for and enjoyment in work, and in excellence of results as measured by the highest official standards, the pupils of this school are not surpassed by those of any school having a similar pupil body in this or any other country.

WM. B. WAIT, *Emeritus Principal.*

March 25, 1908.

# An Authentic Account from Original Sources Relating to Trades, Manufacturing Pursuits and Manual Training for the Blind.

## ABSTRACTS FROM MANAGERS' REPORTS.

1832–1833. From the Managers' Report: "Instruction was given in making baskets, mattresses, manila and coir mats, rag and list carpets. Skilled instructors were employed, one having been brought from Scotland in 1833."

In 1836 and 1838, respectively, braiding palm leaf and paper-box work were introduced. This was an effort to meet the requirement that each pupil should be taught some employment.

1840. Speaking of its work, the Committee says: "That they have given frequent attendance at the Institution but with little success, as the number of pupils and the time devoted to manufactures is limited. An effort was made to have all the pupils contribute some part of their time to manufactures, but the Special Committee to which this subject was referred by the Board of Managers entertained the opinion that the pupils must be either at music, manufactures, or must be qualified as teachers according to their capacity to receive instruction."

1842. From the Committee's Report: "Although your Committee are aware that the object of the Managers is to cause the pupils to be instructed in a trade, and also to effect this object with as little loss to the Institution as may be practicable, yet they have indulged a hope, and indeed they still entertain that hope, that ultimately some revenue may come to be realized from the product of the pupil's labor, should a favorable change of times occur."

1843. From the Committee's Report: "Your Committee have made much effort during the year to increase sales. They have exhibited samples in sundry localities in this city, and have also consigned samples to various towns in the State of Virginia and some to Mobile. But we regret to say that the result of their efforts has not in either case equaled their hopes. The sales effected in other States have been but inconsiderable in amount, and, moreover, at prices not satisfactory."

1844. From the Managers' Report: "In the early stages of any new pursuit, before the requisite skill is achieved, great waste of material ensues, the work produced is imperfect and unsalable, and a positive loss follows the experiment. Many of our pupils are without connections or friends capable of aiding them in the attempt to establish a business for themselves, after having completed their course of instruction; and without some aid in the commencement, in the purchase of materials and the sale of their manufactures, disabled as they are by the loss of sight, success cannot reasonably be expected. To obviate this, and as a reward for good conduct, the Board of Managers propose to employ a limited number of the graduated pupils in the manufacturing departments, paying them such wages as may be fairly equivalent to their labor and furnishing to them board and lodging at a reasonable rate. To enable the Board to carry into effect this benevolent intention, a slight addition to the privileges conferred by their charter will be required, and which will be asked for during the present session of your honorable body. This experiment will be valuable also in testing how far a retreat for the educated blind might be sustained by the product of their own labor, a subject that has long engaged, and still engages, the anxious attention of many philanthropists in and out of this Board."

From the Committee's Report: "The course of instruction is such as to fit most of our graduates UNDER FAVORABLE CIRCUMSTANCES TO EARN THEIR OWN MAINTENANCE; BUT THE NECESSITY OF A SUITABLE PLACE FOR PROSECUTING THEIR LABORS AND OF A REGULAR MARKET FOR THEIR SUPPLIES HAS APPEARED SO OBVIOUS TO YOUR COMMITTEE AS TO INDUCE THE SUGGESTION OF AN APPLICATION TO THE LEGISLATURE, SO TO INCREASE OUR CORPORATE POWERS AS TO ALLOW US TO AFFORD THE PROTECTION OF OUR ROOF TO THOSE WHO WOULD OTHERWISE BE UNABLE TO AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THE ACQUISITIONS THEY HAVE MADE UNDER OUR CARE."

1845. From the Managers' Report: "The manufacturing departments continue to be conducted with their usual vigor and skill. They are, however, a charge upon the Institution. The seeing apprentice is animated with the hope that when his trade is learned he shall be possessed of the means of independence, and this assurance causes him to work with alacrity and cheerfulness; but the solitary and unaided efforts of a blind workman have seldom been successful, and it is the want of the stimulus which a prospect of ultimate profitable employment would give which renders the blind reluctant to engage in mechanical pursuits, and indifferent as to the manner in which their labor is performed.

"The only way in which this obstacle can ever be removed, the Board are convinced, is in the establishment, in connection with institutions for the education of the blind, of workshops for those who have acquired trades; in which, after deducting the bare expenses of the establishment, the profits shall be divided among the workmen. The necessity for the



establishment of such an asylum in connection with our Institution has long occupied the attention of the Managers, and the experience of each successive year only renders that necessity the more apparent.

"An isolated blind mechanic requires much aid from one who can see, and the profits of his business seldom afford the means of paying for such aid. Scattered through the country at a distance from market and with very limited means, they are often unable to procure the materials for carrying on their work at all, or are compelled to obtain them at prices which they cannot afford, and their articles seldom find ready purchasers.

"The establishment of an asylum where the blind might unite their efforts; where materials might be bought in large quantities, and consequently at the lowest rates; where the advantage of proximity to a large market is afforded; where the aid of only one seeing person to a large number of blind would be needed; where board, clothing, fuel, etc., could be furnished at the lowest possible rates, and where opportunities for social and mental improvement would be afforded, which they could not enjoy elsewhere, is now the only thing needed."

1845. From the Committee's Report: "The labors of our inmates have heretofore been chiefly confined to willow work, the weaving of carpets and mats and pasteboard work; and while under the fostering care of our Institution, where convenient workshops, tools especially constructed for their use, and well-selected materials are provided to their hands, these branches have been prosecuted with a gratifying degree of success; yet the observation of each successive year renders it more apparent that they are not those which can be successfully followed by the blind when deprived of the advantages of these favoring circumstances.

"Under this conviction it has been a matter of much solicitude to devise the means of affording the advantages of mechanical instruction, of such a nature as may more readily be made available by our pupils when removed from the protection of our roof. With this in view, the Committee has had under consideration several plans of extending the range of our mechanical pursuits, but have not as yet succeeded in maturing any which promised to accomplish the particular object which they sought to attain. THE OBSTACLES WHICH MUST ALWAYS ATTEND THE UNASSISTED EFFORTS OF THE BLIND FOR THEIR SUPPORT SEEM TO APPLY ALMOST UNIVERSALLY TO EVERY DEPARTMENT OF LABOR. The difficulties of workmen, first for the advantageous selection of the material and afterwards for the sale of the wares when manufactured, together with their inability to cheapen their work when competition makes price rather than quality the chief requisite to a ready sale—these and such like disadvantages fully explain why many, though proficient in mechanical branches while under our protecting care, would, if deprived of it, be again reduced to a state of dependence, and seem to point to association in effort as the only permanent means of independence.

"The Committee are not left to theorize on the probable advantages to result from such a community of effort, nor to be guided entirely by the experience of others for the experiment of the last few months, when our Institution not only evidenced the feasibility of such a project, but almost demonstrated its success. Six of our inmates, whose terms had expired, embraced the opportunity presented by our Board of Managers of continuing as journeymen or pieceworkers. They have been charged a moderate price for board and have been credited with the value of the articles manufactured, the cost of material being first deducted, and the result has proved the ability of self-maintenance, even when only a moderate degree of proficiency has been attained."

1846. Referring to this workshop, the Managers say: "Its effectiveness has been increased by the addition of a number of graduated pupils who spend the whole of their time there.

"The prospective employment of our graduated pupils in an establishment provided especially to meet their wants has not been lost sight of, and the experience of another year but tends to confirm our opinion of the feasibility and utility of such a plan."

1846. From the Committee's Report: "The department during the past year exhibits a very satisfactory progress as compared with former years. Notwithstanding the amount of sales and articles manufactured and on hand have largely increased, there exists a larger deficiency than at the date of the last annual report. The causes are explained by the fact that the expenses of the graduated pupils or journeymen have this year been a charge to this department, while in the previous year their expenses were borne by the general fund of the Institution, and this department received the benefit of their labor without charge. Though the labor of these pupils is correctly charged to this department, they make the explanation to show that had not such been the case, this department, instead of showing an increased deficiency, would with this payment show a small balance in the credit. A large reduction in the price of the manufactured articles has been necessary in order to compete successfully with other makers.

"The Committee would advert to the situation of those pupils who remain as journeymen or pieceworkers a short period previous to leaving the Institution. It has been suggested in former reports that an asylum or association should be established for this class of our pupils, where they might earn a respectable livelihood and at the same time find a comfortable home. The exertions of these journeymen for the past year afford a fair sample of their capabilities. MANY OF THEM LABOR DILIGENTLY TWELVE AND THIRTEEN HOURS EVERY DAY, AND WITH EVERY FACILITY OUR WORKSHOPS AFFORD, THEY ARE ONLY ENABLED BY THE MOST UNWEARIED ASSIDUITY TO EARN FOR THEMSELVES A LIVELIHOOD, THOUGH THEIR WANTS ARE FEW AND THE PRICE PAID FOR THEIR BOARD TO THE INSTITUTION VERY MODERATE."



1848. From the Managers' Report: "The necessity for the establishment of a workshop for the industrious adult blind, both for our graduates and those who lost their sight at an age which disqualifies them from becoming pupils, has long been forcing itself upon the minds of the Managers of this Institution, and to this object their labors during the past year have been earnestly directed. * * *

"The object of this establishment will be to place within reach of the industrious blind of both sexes the means of earning their support, and at the same time to furnish to such as may desire it a comfortable home. It has been demonstrated that mechanical pursuits cannot be successfully prosecuted by the blind against the competition of the seeing without the aid of the same appliances which contribute to the profits of their more favored competitors. These are the advantages of associated labor, of capital, and, in addition, of a workshop furnished with tools and fixtures adapted to the peculiar wants of the blind. These facilities it is the aim of the Managers to afford. It will be emphatically a home for the industrious blind, where they will be furnished with constant employment, the profits of which will be divided among them proportionately to the assiduity and skill of each; where such as desire it may be boarded and lodged in a comfortable manner and at the lowest rate; where they will have opportunities for intellectual and moral improvement and be free from all care and anxiety about the purchase of materials or the sale of their work. Those who have facilities will be enabled, by residing in the vicinity and laboring in the workshop, not only to earn their own livelihood, but to contribute somewhat to the support of those to whom they must otherwise become a burden.

"The building will stand on Eighth Avenue and will contain a large wareroom or store for the sale of our manufactured articles; and it is to be hoped that the increased facilities for the sale of such articles will enable us to dispose of them as fast as they are produced. * * *

"Great difficulty is found in the selection of branches of manufacture in which the blind may hope to compete with the seeing with any chance of success. Their privation completely excludes them from the prosecution of by far the greater number of mechanical pursuits, and from those which remain, such must be selected as are easy of acquisition, which will not require a large outlay of capital either for stock or tools, and in which the cost of the material shall bear the small and the value of the labor the greater proportion.

"These considerations bring the blind at once within the widest sphere of competition, that of simple labor alone. The articles made by them, though strong and durable, are not so smooth and well-shaped as those made by the seeing, which places them still further at a disadvantage. However, by affording them every facility which the nature of their condition will admit, and which it is the object of our new work-

shop to give, it is hoped that these disadvantages will be rendered less apparent."

By an act passed April 7, 1848, the incorporating act was amended by adding the words, "and also for the purpose of affording an asylum and employment for other blind persons."

1849. From the Managers' Report: "The mechanical pursuits which a person deprived of sight may follow must always be very few, and the arts they may learn must be of the very simplest kind and such as bring them within the sphere of the widest competition, not only of mere bone and muscle, but of the steam engine and the water wheel. The difficulty, therefore, in finding profitable employment for them cannot be magnified. Still we believe the case is not hopeless, and that with the facilities which we shall hereafter be able to afford, every blind man and woman who is willing to work, and work industriously, will be placed beyond the reach of want."

1849. From the Committee's Report: "The graduates have returned to the Institution to enjoy the protection promised to such as will endeavor to support themselves. The building is now finished and occupied. Its name, The Manufacturing Department for the Blind, betokens its purpose. The store fronts upon Eighth Avenue, already a great thoroughfare, and will offer in its windows such samples that the passers-by can satisfy themselves as to the skillful workmanship and strength of the several articles."

1850. From the Managers' Report: "This subject has not been taken up until its necessity had been fully demonstrated. The blind had been taught to hope that we were putting into their hands the means of independence in the trades we were teaching. We had encouraged them to go forth to make the experiment of self-support. They had made the attempt, and although with many instances of success, the far greater number found the object unattainable.

"Thus defeated and disappointed our graduate pupils came back, and constant were the applications for relief, which at that time neither the charter nor the existing arrangements of the Institution allowed us to extend to them.

"To enable us to meet this great want the Legislature extended our corporate powers, and under this expanded charter the new department has been founded and has for several months been in successful operation.

"The work department now furnishes employment to thirty-three blind persons—twenty-one men and twelve women. Of the men six are married and board and lodge with their families at home. It is optional to all to board and lodge where they choose, the Institution merely furnishing a home to those who cannot do better elsewhere.

"The trades pursued by the men are willow-basket making, carpet weaving, mat and mattress making, and we have recently introduced broom



making. The women are principally employed at paper-box making, plain sewing and the making of fancy work furnishing employment for three or four.

"The department for adults is open to every blind person of proper age and good moral character. The inmates come and go as they please.

"During the past year all the inmates have paid their board, by far the larger number have been able to clothe themselves respectably, and some have laid up a few dollars. Those who entered the establishment without any knowledge of the trades pursued there are necessarily dependent upon their friends until they have become so far proficient as to be able to produce salable articles."

1851. From the Managers' Report: "An important change was made at the commencement of this year in the mode of conducting our manufacturing department. Hitherto it had been managed by salaried officers having no interest in the result, and it was believed that because of this arrangement less energy was exhibited in the management and less vigilance to prevent the waste of material and the production of salable articles. Accordingly, persons were employed to conduct the several branches of manufacture who receive a fixed though moderate compensation, and depending upon their skill and energy in the management of the business for the complement of income. The benefits anticipated from the operation of this principle have been realized in the much greater economy in the use of material and the superior quality of the articles produced.

"A mistaken idea seems to have taken hold of a portion of the public mind. It is supposed that our Institution is richly endowed, or that it derives an ample support from the public funds, and that its manufactures are carried on simply for the sake of affording the blind employment. It is time the public were enlightened in this respect. The Institution has no funds out of which it can support them. It has done what it could to lessen the disadvantages of blindness. They have their workshop without rent. They have the benefit of capital to carry on the business. They receive their board for the least possible price, for less probably than it actually costs. Not a single dollar is added to the funds of the Institution from the labor of the blind.

"During the past year mattress making has been introduced."

1853. From the Managers' Report: "As foreshadowed in our report of last year, the operations of our manufacturing department became so extended as to require more room. With cramped accommodations it was impossible to satisfy the requests of applicants from various parts of this and other States for work. It was deemed advisable by the Board to borrow upon mortgage the sum of $5,000 to erect on Eighth Avenue a substantial edifice which should combine the double purpose of large workshops for the blind and spacious stores on the ground floor and fronting on the avenue. It was supposed the latter would produce an

income sufficient to keep down the annual interest upon the mortgage, and also to form a partial sinking fund. * * *

"Hitherto the Institution has afforded board and lodging to the adults at a minimum price, the sole requirement being testimonials of good moral character. It has been apprehended that sometimes these testimonies might be given without that due regard for entire accuracy which ought to serve as a guarantee to the Managers for the proper conduct of adults living in one common household.

"All must know the impossibility of restraining by strict rules, except in prisons or lunatic asylums, men and women who have worked hard all day and have earned thereby, together with their wages, a release from the jealous eye of the superintendent and the shackles which a community of interest must necessarily impose upon each one of the manufacturing household. IT WILL THEREFORE BE PERCEIVED THAT THE MANAGEMENT WERE ASSUMING A FEARFUL RESPONSIBILITY RESPECTING ADULTS OVER WHOM, NO MATTER WHAT MIGHT BE THE OSTENSIBLE STRICTNESS OF THE REGULATIONS, RESTRAINT COULD NOT BE EXERCISED DURING OTHER THAN WORKING HOURS.

"It was therefore determined that after the first of January all applicants should be supplied with work, BUT NOT FURNISHED WITH BOARD AND LODGING; and that such as at present were with us should, as soon as practicable, provide for themselves elsewhere.

"Experience indicates that as our operations increase, the difficulties of carrying out the original purposes as conceived for a small household are perhaps insurmountable, having due regard to that discipline which properly ought to be maintained. * * *

"As success may attend the business, it is proposed to increase the wages of the operatives and thereby enable them to accumulate something beyond the amount necessary for their daily expenses of living. Every inducement will be offered to stimulate their efforts for self-support. The Managers simply wish to relieve themselves from the grave responsibility as to the conduct, except while in the workshop, of parties drawn together from very different stations in life and frequently without previous education or restraint. To teach them to labor is comparatively an easy duty, but to connect with this the anxiety of the moral establishment would be placing the success of the whole undertaking in jeopardy. The manufacturing and indeed the very Institution for the undergraduates would be loaded down with a responsibility which neither the State nor any class of her citizens could in justice exact."

1854. From the Managers' Report: "IT MUST NEVER BE FORGOTTEN THAT BLINDNESS IS AN IRREPARABLE PRIVATION, AND THAT IN THE GREAT MASS THE WANT OF SIGHT IS SO GREAT A DISADVANTAGE IN THE SHARP COMPETITION OF TRADE THAT SOME AID IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR THE BLIND WORKMAN. * * * Therefore, your honorable body amended our charter, and in addition



to the instruction of blind pupils, declared that this Institution is designed 'also for the purpose of giving an asylum and employment for other blind persons.'

"This duty the Managers have faithfully met; * * * but, unfortunately, the universal commercial embarrassment has affected this department of the Institution, as it has all other manufacturing establishments. It has stopped our sales and cut short our only means of sustaining this branch, for it must be remembered that the Institution has no capital whatever; and when, instead of the returns of sales, it finds itself with a large stock of manufactured goods on hand without means of continuing, its operations are at once at an end, and the consequence has been that we have been compelled to curtail to a large extent our manufacturing department, and many have been thrown out of employment."

1854. From the Committee's Report: "This Committee is obliged to report that the present commercial crisis everywhere has affected the department most disastrously. The stock of manufactured articles remaining on hand amounts to nearly double that of last year, and the high price paid for raw material, together with much diminished sales, have brought about great pecuniary embarrassment.

"The Committee, therefore, do not hesitate to declare that unless aid be immediately furnished by the State Legislature, the business of this department must be greatly diminished, if not entirely discontinued, and the privations and sufferings of the indigent blind will be most distressing."

1855. From the Managers' Report: "Of the manufacturing department the Managers regret that it is not in their power to present so favorable a picture. Their efforts to provide permanent employment for the adult blind have not been crowned with success, and experience has shown that all such efforts must fail unless sustained by more extensive pecuniary resources. When their last Annual Report was submitted the Managers believed that the whole existing embarrassment of their manufacturing department was owing solely to the recent commercial disasters, which pervaded all classes of the community.

"In this they were in a certain sense right, but were not right in supposing that a commercial crisis was necessary to produce such a result.

"Further experience and reflection have shown that such a result is unavoidable without the diffusion of very considerable means to sustain the enterprise.

"AN ESTABLISHMENT IN WHICH BLIND PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED IN MAKING VARIOUS ARTICLES WHICH THE INSTITUTION UNDERTAKES TO SELL FOR THEM IS NEITHER MORE NOR LESS THAN A MANUFACTORY. IT HAS TO COMPETE WITH OTHER MANUFACTURERS OF THE SAME ARTICLES. ITS MANAGEMENT IS NECESSARILY INFERIOR TO THAT OF THOSE WHICH ARE MANAGED BY THEIR OWN PROPRIETORS, AND ITS WORKPEOPLE CAN SUSTAIN BUT A MOST UNEQUAL COMPETITION WITH SEEING WORKMEN.

"More than this, no manufacturing establishment can sustain itself without some capital, and an Institution having no capital is in no position to meet the embarrassing effects of a constantly accumulating stock of goods, which cannot be sold fast enough to keep an overwhelming load of debt from accumulating.

"Another circumstance increased the difficulties of our position. THE FACT THAT THE INSTITUTION AFFORDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE BLIND TO SUPPORT THEMSELVES ATTRACTED TO THIS CITY many who were desirous of the means thus afforded of securing an independent livelihood, so that the number of those dependent upon the Institution was increasing in a corresponding ratio.

"The loss of trade brought the whole matter to a stand and necessarily compelled the Institution to discontinue to a great extent its operations in this direction, and it is entirely obvious that they cannot be renewed without the appropriation of a very large fund to enable them to carry them on.

"We had hoped that the interest felt for the industrious blind by the community would have been sufficient to secure a sale for the products of their industry, but experience has shown that this feeling can be relied on only to a very limited extent, and that to effect sales of the great bulk of our products we could only rely upon the common laws of trade.

"The subject is one of great difficulty, the Board still have it under consideration, and trust that some plan may yet be devised to meet this important and pressing want."

1855. From the Superintendent's Report: "THE NECESSITY OF KEEPING THE WORKPEOPLE IN CONSTANT EMPLOYMENT, WHATEVER MAY BE THE EXIGENCIES OF TRADE, OF BUYING RAW MATERIAL, HOWEVER HIGH THE PRICE, AND OF SALES SOMETIMES AT THE LOWEST RATES, RENDERS COMMERCIAL SUCCESS IMPOSSIBLE. * * *

"The Institution, desirous of performing its whole duty, made no change in its schedule of operations. It could not without injustice dismiss the inferior workmen, retaining only the more skillful, for all were equally entitled to its good offices. It could not willingly reduce the rates of labor, for those were already placed at a bare support. The shops were kept open to all the workmen without employment, and the goods remained unsold. The consequences were ruinous. * * *

"To dismiss those for whom the Institution was not responsible, but whom it had gladly assisted, would remove the difficulty only for a time and in part, for the increase of our pupils and graduates would soon raise the list of workpeople.

"TO PROVIDE WORK SOLELY FOR THOSE DESTITUTE OF MEANS AND FRIENDS WOULD GIVE NO RELIEF. THE WHOLE BODY OF OUR GRADUATES, WITH BUT FEW EXCEPTIONS, WOULD AT ONCE CLAIM ASSISTANCE. A GUARANTEE OF WORK AND SUPPORT WOULD BE AN ALLUREMENT EVEN TO THOSE ABLE AND WILLING TO HELP THEMSELVES. FAMILIES IN POOR CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WHO WOULD FEEL



THEIR BLIND RELATIVES A TAX UPON THEM, MIGHT BE LED TO SHIFT THEIR FRIENDS UPON THE PUBLIC, AND EVEN PEOPLE OF MEANS AND RESPECTABILITY HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO WITHDRAW THEIR PROTECTION FROM THOSE OF THEIR OWN BLOOD. WHY TAX THE PUBLIC AND BURDEN THE INSTITUTION WHERE KINDLY DOMESTIC TIES ANSWER A BETTER PURPOSE?

"These causes, added to the attractions of a large city with the social freedom, have served to vitiate the original principle of the Institution; namely, to render the blind self-dependent and self-supporting. * * *

"It seems necessary that the blind, their friends and the public should understand the limits of responsibility on the part of the Institution; that it is not an asylum and cannot be even for a few, except at the cost of principle and of the ultimate advantage of the blind."

1856. From the Managers' Report: "The manufacturing department has continued its operations, but at a heavy loss to the Institution, and the experience of many years has now fully demonstrated that the competition of seeing workmen, backed by the capital of employers, puts it out of the power of the Institution to conduct this department without incurring a loss which our funds are by no means adequate to meet.

"The Managers are anxiously considering how to find some way which will meet the case and be effective, practical and free from the great objection of being in effect a charitable provision, instead of what it ought to be, an opportunity to earn an independent livelihood."

1857. From the Managers' Report: "It must be mentioned that this department, as in former years, has continued to be a dead weight upon the Institution; and experience has now fully demonstrated that it is impossible to conduct it without incurring a loss which it is impossible to sustain for any length of time"

1860. From the Managers' Report: "The Managers propose during the coming session of the Legislature to solicit directions from your honorable bodies on the important subject of the adult blind. How to provide for the adult blind, or rather how to enable them to provide for themselves, is a question which has long been an embarrassing subject to the Managers of this Institution. Experience has shown that an asylum for the adult blind is not a proper appendage to a school for blind pupils, and our own experience has shown that any attempt by this Institution to support such an asylum must result in a constant and heavy loss, and must end in the ultimate ruin of the Institution, and that the recent action of the Legislature freeing the Institution from all connection with any such object was not only wise and proper, but was apparently necessary to save the Institution from utter ruin, from being lost for its great original purpose of instructing blind youth, without affording any permanent benefit to the adult blind.

"Besides, the disastrous and irresistible financial consequences of such an appendage, the existence of a department consisting of a class

entirely different from pupils over whom the discipline to which pupils are subject could not be exercised, and the influence of whom upon the youth was unfavorable, tended to impair the disclipine and to retard the progress and also the moral tone of its pupils.

"THE MANAGERS, HOWEVER, THOUGH AS FIRMLY CONVINCED OF THE NECESSITY OF RELIEVING THIS INSTITUTION FROM ANY CONNECTION WITH THE BLIND, BEYOND THAT OF INSTRUCTING AND EDUCATING SUCH BLIND PERSONS AS ARE PROPER SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION AND EDUCATION, are very far from being indifferent to the cause of the adult blind. They are indeed much disappointed to find that the expectations they formerly entertained of providing, within the walls of this Institution, for the adult blind, as well as for the blind pupil, can no longer be indulged, but they have not ceased to give this important subject constant attention for some years past, and have annually laid before the Legislature the results of their observation and experience in their Annual Reports, and respectfully refer to those reports to show how the practical results of their efforts have gradually driven them to their present position.

"After much consideration the Managers feel prepared to submit a plan which they believe to be both practical and practicable, the establishment of an independent Institution which should not be an almshouse, but which should furnish to the respectable blind man and woman the means of earning a livelihood, by supplying the inequalities naturally existing between the seeing and sightless workmen. The Managers believe that their experience is sufficient to indicate the system on which such an Institution should be conducted, so as to give the industrious blind an opportunity to provide for themselves without becoming a refuge for the idle and unprincipled, or the means of attracting to our city and State the helpless and indigent of other States and foreign countries."

1861. From the Managers' Report: "In the manufacturing department has occurred during the past year an important change in the final relinquishment of the attempt to provide work and self-support for blind persons not pupils. The Managers have repeatedly brought this subject to the notice of the Legislature.

"IT IS OBVIOUS TO THE MANAGERS THAT SUCH AID SHOULD BE FURNISHED BY AN INSTITUTION ORGANIZED FOR THAT PURPOSE AND HAVING THAT OBJECT AND NO OTHER IN VIEW, AND OUGHT NOT TO BE ATTEMPTED BY AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.

"The Managers have been driven by experience to the conclusion that such an Institution should have its own separate Board of Directors, its own organization and its own separate management."

Note, 1862. The recommendation of the Managers for the incorporation of an independent society resulted in an organization known as the Blind Mechanics Association. (See page 5.)



In 1862 the law of 1848, adding to the original purpose of education that of an asylum and giving employment, was repealed.

Since 1862, when the Institution resumed its original character as an educational institution, great attention has been given to the varied phases of manual training, which possess educational value far beyond that which attaches to handicraft pursuits, and which are free from the undesirable tendencies and disappointing results which accompany instruction in trades.

In 1908, March 4, the managers adopted the following:

*Whereas*, The prolonged experience of this Institution in the past, covering a period of nearly thirty years, has, in the opinion of this Board, fully demonstrated the educational and practical inutility of instructing the blind committed to our care in trades; and

*Whereas*, Such instruction, even if it were both possible and useful, could certainly not be given without compelling us practically to abandon our original purpose, and our present important educational work; and

*Whereas*, The present complicated conditions of labor and trade make *ultimate* success in that direction much less likely now than it was in the past, when the most intelligent and patient efforts led to hopeless failure and almost to financial ruin; and

*Whereas*, Such a course would be a direct injury to the young blind; and would result in forfeiture of the position and recognition which we have gained among the educational institutions of this State and in the University of the State of New York; and also in the loss of bequests from that large number of our citizens who are interested in aiding institutions of an educational character; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That this Board hereby records its belief that teaching of trades should not be attempted by this Institution.

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END OF
TITLE